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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 002143

SIPDIS

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/FO, SCA/A, S/CR, S/CT  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN  
OSD FOR SHIVERS  
CENTCOM FOR CG CG CJTF-82, AND POLAD  
RELEASABLE TO NATO/ISAF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 7/7/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [AF](#)  
SUBJECT: PRT/BADGHIS: DEALING WITH ETHNIC POLITICS,  
CORRUPTION, LACK OF INVESTMENT, AND NOW TALIBAN

Classified By: A/DCM Carol Rodley for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

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SUMMARY  
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¶1. (SBU) The June 9th insurgent attack against the Murghab district center that left two Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) Officers dead and three government buildings damaged by fire was the largest and best organized insurgent attack to date in normally calm Badghis Province. The attack is an example of Taliban exploiting the frustration of the politically and economically marginalized minority Pashtun populations located in otherwise stable provinces. Frustration over corrupt and non-responsive governance are reflected in tolerance for the Taliban and an increase in insurgent activity. The Spanish PRT plans to begin development projects in remote Pashtun districts this year, and is looking for GOA, NGO, and other support. END SUMMARY

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PASHTUNS QUIETLY SUPPORT TALIBAN  
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¶2. (SBU) According to UNAMA, the population of Badghis is 55 percent Tajik and provincial leadership has been Tajik-dominated. The Province's 37 percent Pashtun population is centered in the districts of northern Murghab and Ghormach, which have seen growing insecurity in recent months. A well-planned June 9 attack left two ANSF officers dead and three government buildings partially destroyed. In a meeting with PRTOff, Pashtun elders from several communities pointed to two factors fueling discontent in Pashtun areas: lack of governance/services and a tolerance for non-government authorities, particularly the Taliban. Seeing themselves as marginalized by the corrupt Tajik-dominated provincial administration, many rural Pashtuns view the Taliban as an alternative.

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SECURITY AND INVESTMENT: CHICKEN AND EGG  
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¶3. (SBU) The NGO community and the Tajik-dominated provincial government have long accepted that lack of security in the

Pashtun-dominated districts makes development impossible. This lack of investment and assistance has fed alienation and made security more difficult. The Ghormach District Administrator made this point when disputing security assessments in his district: "There are problems, but local leaders can provide the security in their areas and are willing to do so if the project benefits the community, like a school or clinic. Security concerns in the districts are always exaggerated by people located in the provincial capital. It is the excuse the Tajiks use not to share development funds with us Pashtuns."

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MORE ASSISTANCE EFFORTS NEEDED  
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¶4. (SBU) The Spanish Government's development agency (AECI) has decided to fund two projects in Ghormach and Murghab to test whether local residents will provide protection for development. AECI Director Pablo Yuste stresses that AECI's USD 13.4 million annual contribution represents virtually the entire international development budget in Badghis. He said he hoped other international funding sources would "back fill" development efforts in the more secure and accessible parts of the province so it did not come down to a choice between projects for Pashtuns or projects for Tajiks.

¶5. (SBU) USAID is developing a response mechanism for these types of situations. Informally dubbed the "Play Book", it will draw from existing programs that have a capacity to surge into an area challenged by disaffected populations. Play Book programs include micro-finance, alternative development, agriculture, capacity building and small scale

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infrastructure. The surge will allow USAID and others the breathing room to mount longer term development efforts, such as the proposed "Provincial Governance Fund" and the like. The Play Book was originally developed for use in the east and south, but USAID will explore the application of the Play Book in Badghis as soon as practicable.

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NEW GOVERNOR, CHANCE FOR CHANGE  
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¶6. (C) Neither Pashtuns nor Tajiks had confidence in recently-removed Governor Mohammed Nasim, who was seen by most as the main source of corruption on the Province. On June 25, Mohammed Ashraf Naseri replaced Nasim, and initial impression are that he has the experience and education necessary to effect positive change in the Province. Naseri, an educated Pashtun, has years of management experience both within the GOA and the NGO community. He will face the challenge of bridging the Tajik-Pashtun divide by convincing both their needs will not be addressed at the expense of the other.  
WOOD